



# THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



## Senate Resolution for Italian Heritage Month

The NJ Senate has unanimously voted in favor of a Joint Resolution designating October as Italian-American Heritage and History Month in perpetuity. In the past, October was proclaimed as Italian Heritage month on an annual basis by the standing Governor. This year, through the efforts of UNICO and the Coccia Institute, Governor McGreevey already issued a special gubernatorial proclamation establishing October 2004 as Italian American Heritage Month.

The Senate's move aims to create

a permanent status for the month of October as Italian Heritage Month. The Joint Resolution now goes to the Assembly, where it will be considered in the State Government Committee and then moved to the floor of the Assembly for a vote. The final step in the Joint Resolution process will be to bring the Resolution to the standing Governor for signing.

The Commission would like to congratulate the primary and secondary sponsors of the Senate

Resolution: Senators Bucco, Sarlo, Inverso and Gill.



NJ State Capitol Building

## Curriculum Committee Outlines 3-Year Plan

The Chairperson of the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) of the Commission, Dr. Gilda Rorro, outlined a 3-year potential plan to begin the distribution of the "Universality of Italian Heritage" curriculum guidelines to the State's school districts. The CDC has developed 16 lesson plans, designed for 6-12 grade students, which are being piloted in selected school districts this academic year.

After a 1-year field test for the

Phase I Pilot, the original plans will be evaluated by teachers, revised and re-released for a second Phase II Pilot. This Second Pilot, scheduled for the 2005-2006 academic year, will also include lesson plans for grades K-5 and new 6-12 plans.

In addition to the Curriculum Model for teachers, the CDC is working on a variety of other products for the public and for students. The Commission's

website will post a Curriculum section in 2005, which will contain biographies, historical essays, bibliographic references, website links, classroom activities and essential figures in Italian history. The CDC is also developing a book for publication that covers Italian history and the history of Italian Americans in New Jersey. By the 2006-2007 year, the curriculum will begin roll-out.

## Institute Launches Internship Program



University Interns Meeting at Rutgers

The Commission's Institute of Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies has launched its new Fall internship program and is seeking student volunteers to assist the Commission with its programs. The Institute internship program will enable students from various universities to work with the Commission staff to research, develop and execute a variety

of tasks and projects, including demographics research; research on Italian and Italian American organizations; research on Italian language programs in schools and universities; identification of Italian and Italian American businesses; and assessment of Italian resources available to the public. Slots are still available as the Institute is seeking up to 12 interns to fill the required assignments.



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### Chairman's Message

The State of NJ has one of the largest populations of Italian Americans in the United States. Their large numbers represent approximately a quarter of NJ's citizens, making them the largest ethnic group in the State. The Italians of NJ rank as the 2nd largest population after New York.

Many of these citizens belong to the more than 400 Italian American organizations, institutions and entities in the State, which foster the growing promotion of the Italian and Italian American Heritage. Over 150 schools have Italian language teachers and more than 30,000 students from kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade are studying Italian. In addition,



Commission Chairman Larry Paragano

business and trade between Italy and NJ is flourishing. In 2003, Italy was NJ's 11<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner, exporting over \$470 million in goods and services.

The Commission's role is to educate NJ's citizens about these impressive statistics. Our numbers reinforce the need for the NJ community to continue supporting the Italian Heritage.

### Commission Upcoming Events

- **October 23, 2004** -  
*NJ Congress of Italian American Organizations*  
1<sup>st</sup> statewide convention at Rutgers University
- **October 25-31, 2004**  
*Age of Galileo Symposium* -  
Public events at Rutgers U
- **December 4, 2004** -  
*History of Italian American Discrimination Conference*  
Public event at Seton Hall
- **March 18, 2005** -  
*Italian Heritage Day*  
Student Conference at Douglass College by ITANJ
- **March 19, 2005** -  
*4<sup>th</sup> Italian American Leadership Convocation*  
Public event Camden College

## NJ Italian American Congress Taking Shape

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission will host a state convention for members of Italian American organizations, Italian teachers, and students on Saturday, October 23rd at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Named the "1st NJ Congress of Italian American Organizations", this convention is seeking to bring together representatives from many of the 400 groups in North, Central and South Jersey.

This convention presents an important, unique opportunity for organizations to network, coordinate, and plan together. The purpose of this conference is to draw attention to the issues confronting the Italian American community, thereby increasing

public awareness. This major event will become a historical watershed in the joining of efforts and ideas among NJ's community of 2 million Italian Americans.

Congress attendees will participate in discussions that will focus on the Italian culture, the Italian language, negative stereotyping and the work of organizations. Teachers, students and parents will be interested especially in the discussions on youth programs, scholarships, educational exchanges with Italy and the Italian Heritage curriculum.

Hundreds of individuals, students and organizations have been invited to attend, including national representatives from the National Italian American Foundation, UNICO and the



October 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress at Rutgers

Order of the Sons of Italy in America. Representatives of the Government of Italy, elected NJ government officials and educators also will be present.

Following the closing gavel, Mr. Michael Immerso, author of *Newark's Little Italy*, will present on his work and will be available for a book-signing. In addition, musical interludes will include the Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra and Italian singers. Please join this important event.



## Italian Demographics in NJ

The Commission's Institute for Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies at Rutgers University is developing a preliminary research project which provides a visual, detailed and comprehensive demographic map breakdown of Italian Americans in New Jersey. The project, which compiled data from a variety of sources, including the 2000 US Census, provides individuals with the following statistics: a county by county and city by city breakdown of the total number and percentage of Italian Americans living in New Jersey. While this project is expected to take well over a year to complete,

the information collected will provide Italian American organizations, schools, institutions and possibly businesses with interesting information related to the distribution of NJ citizens of Italian descent by counties, districts and major towns.

Examples of the ways in which the Commission will utilize the data include: pinpointing school districts with high concentrations of Italian Americans for the Curriculum Project; identifying areas for future events and meetings; establishing likely zones wherein Italian organizations are located; and assessing population centers for future projects.

The Commission will display the draft research project at the 1st Annual NJ Italian American Congress on October 23rd. The display will feature a mounted State map of New Jersey with colored pins indicating the size of that city or town's Italian American community. Once complete, this will be available on the Commission website.

## Foundation Film Moving

The New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation is co-producing an exciting new documentary with NJN entitled: *"The Italians of New Jersey: A Legacy of Achievement"*. This documentary will be released on NJN next year and covers the virtues and values of Italian Americans. The purpose is to promote a positive image by showcasing the successes of many of NJ's Italian American citizens.



"Italians of NJ" Film in Production



Image of Demographic Study in Process

## CAVOUR'S COLUMN

The unanimous passage of the Senate Joint Resolution supporting October as Italian Heritage Month is an encouraging sign that New Jersey's legislators recognize that the Italian Heritage is a very important issue to the State's largest ethnic group. By promoting a positive image of



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This Column is named after Cavour, founder of "Il Risorgimento", the 1847 Italian Newspaper, which promoted Italian unity, heritage and identity.

Italian Americans, the government is promoting a positive image of the State of New Jersey – which has unfortunately been identified with negative stereotypes of Italian Americans promoted in the media.

The mission of the Commission is to counter the negative effects of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination that affects all of New Jersey's ethnic and religious groups. In a multi-cultural state, ethnicity is a value that should be celebrated, not mocked. The Commission's work in the areas of curriculum development, support of positive media productions and the publication of books promoting literature, poetry and history will erode those negative perceptions. In promoting the Italian Heritage, the Commission values, elevates and promotes the ancestry of all peoples.

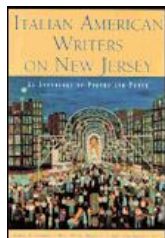




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### Institute Books Available

The Commission's Institute for Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies received an inventory of the newly published book on contemporary Italian and Italian American poetry, *"Binding the Lands: Present Day Poets, Present Day Poetry"*. This work is based on the proceedings of the Third Annual Symposium of the Italian Poetry Society of America, which was a conference held in New York on November 11-13, 1999. The 400-page volume,



Sample of Books Available from Institute

published by the Italian publisher Edizioni Cadmo, was compiled and edited by Professors Alessandro Vettori and Alessandro Carrera. Dr. Vettori, one of the leading professors of the Department of Italian at Rutgers University, received the major portion of funding for the publication of this work from the **New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation**. This book is exclusively available for purchase from the Institute's offices.

In addition, the Institute has the following other works, which it helped to publish: *Italian American Writers on New Jersey*; *Newark's Little Italy*; and *The Italians of New Jersey*. Please contact our offices to acquire one of these works.

The New Jersey Institute of Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies, located at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, is the operational body of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission for program implementation and administration. The Commission, located in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Education, was created pursuant to the enactment of P.L. 2001, Chapter 343 C.18A4-42 and signed into law on in January 2002. The Institute, a 501.c.3. entity with statewide jurisdiction, is charged with providing services to the public at large, as well as public, non-profit and other public service institutions in all twenty-one counties in New Jersey

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